

Encouragement found in Second Coming Teaching:

1. Consolation regarding those who have died:

- Jesus died and he rose again.

We Christians may die but we will be raised to life too.

¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

- Jesus is returning to earth - coming again.

Not to a manger or a cross, but as creation's King.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

- First, Christians who have died will be resurrected.

Then, Christians who are alive will be caught up too.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

a. Christians who have died will both come with Jesus (14) and will rise (16) or be resurrected / re-embodied and ascend.

b. Christians who are alive will, together with those who are raised from the dead, ascend and live with him forever.

2. How to wait for the second coming.

- No one knows when Christ is returning so stay alert.

^{5:1-7} Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.

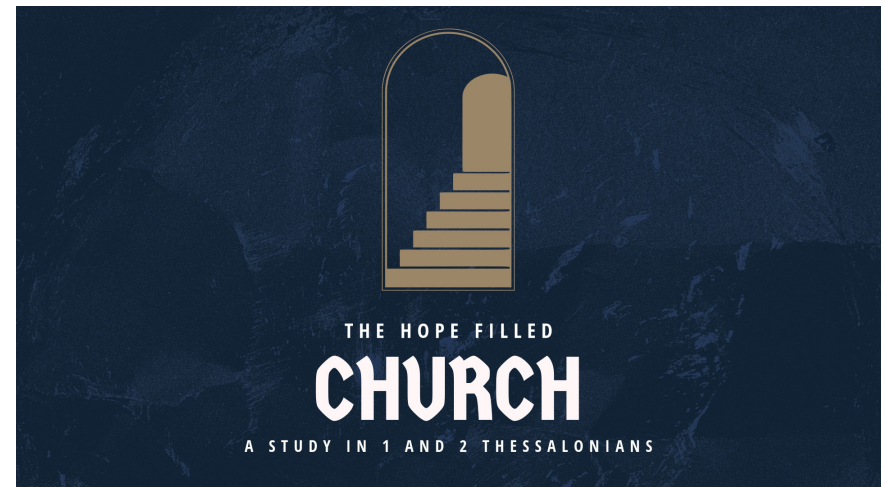
- Remember your armor: Faith-filled, Loving, Hope-filled.

⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

Faith: my confidence in the gospel message

Love: loving God and seeking my neighbor's best

Hope: my firm expectation of the return of Jesus Christ



1Thess. 4:13 - 5:11

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

¹⁵ For this we

uninformed... about those who are asleep: Paul must have heard from Timothy that there was a grave concern among the new converts at Thessalonica. They had been taught by Paul that Jesus would soon come again in glory and that they would rise up into the clouds to be with him forever. But after Paul had hurriedly left them some of their number had died. And they were now very concerned that these loved ones would not be included in this great event. The apostle refers to the deceased using the euphemistic "those who are asleep" (as in 4:14-15; 5:10), although he has no reservations about calling them "the dead" (4:16). The NT teaching clearly points to a conscious existence during the intermediate state (Luke 23:39-43; Acts 7:55-60; 2 Cor. 5:6-10; Rev. 6:9-11).

not grieve as others do who have no hope: The reason why Paul does not want the Thessalonians to be ignorant about the destiny of the deceased Christians is so that they will not grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. Paul in no way prohibits grief in the face of death (see John 16:6, 20; Acts 8:2; Phil. 2:27) but only advises that grief should not be overwhelming like it is to non-believers, who have no real hope for immortality.

we believe that Jesus died and rose again: The reason why Christians should not despair in the face of death like those "who have no hope" is found in the fundamental confession of the church, "We believe that Jesus died and rose again". The centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the cornerstone creed of the apostolic proclamation can hardly be disputed (1 Cor. 15:1-11).

God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep: The author introduces the second part of the church's confession,

declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ **Therefore encourage one another with these words.**

5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon

an inference drawn from the resurrection of Christ: and so "we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him". In death, believers are not separated from Jesus. This phrase then becomes an implicit affirmation that those who die as Christians do not cease to exist between the time of their death and the resurrection; they go to be with Jesus.

we who are alive... will not precede: Paul states that the teaching that follows is inspired by the Lord Jesus and, for that reason, is authoritative for the church. At this point in his ministry, it appears that Paul believed that he was going to remain alive until the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:51-52), although he clearly admits that he did not know exactly when the day of the Lord would come (1 Thess. 5:1-2). However, later in his ministry he no longer expected to be alive to witness that grand event (2 Cor. 4:14; 5:1), although he still believed in the imminent coming of the Lord (Phil. 4:5).

the dead in Christ will rise: The dead in Christ will in no way be excluded from the grand celebration that will surround the second coming of the Lord, but will enjoy a place of honor. Paul states unequivocally that those who have died will both be with Jesus at his coming (verse 14) and when the trumpet sounds, will be resurrected/re-embodied and rise to meet Jesus in the air.

to meet the Lord in the air: The Greek word for "meeting" the Lord in the air in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (apantesin) is used in only two other places in the New Testament: Matthew 25:6 and Acts 28:15. In both places it refers to a meeting in which people go out to meet a dignitary and then accompany him in to the place from which they came out. One of these, Matthew 25:6, is even a parable of the second coming and so a strong argument that this is the sense of the meeting here in 1 Thess. 4:17- that we rise to meet the Lord in the air and then welcome him to earth as ruling king. Many Christians today (but not your Pastors) believe this meeting is a "rapture" of Christians but not the coming of the Lord to earth to judge and rule.

Now concerning the times and the seasons: The apostle is responding to yet another question the Thessalonians had asked via Timothy. Since the apostle had included teaching on the "day of the Lord" in his initial instruction to the church (v. 2), he denies that he really needs to write to the church about times and seasons. Preoccupation with the timing of the day of the

them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ **Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**

Lord arose frequently in biblical and Jewish literature; and so the question the Thessalonians raised is not surprising. In the following verse the Thessalonians are reminded that they cannot know when this grand event will occur but that they should be prepared for it at all times.

the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night: Since Jesus taught the disciples that it was impossible to know when this day would occur (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32-37; Acts 1:7), it was necessary to be ready for it at all times (2 Pet. 3:10-11). The day of the Lord will come suddenly at an unexpected moment, that is, "like a thief in the night". This assertion finds its roots in the teaching of Jesus about his coming and was then incorporated into the instruction given to the church about the end (2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). The apostle never argued that there would be no signs before the end (see 2 Thess. 2:1-4); he only wanted to say that it was impossible to set the time of this event and no one should try to do so.

for that day to surprise you like a thief: Paul contrasts the condition of the church in anticipation of the day of the Lord with that of the unbelievers in the city. The day of the Lord will come upon the unconverted at an unexpected time, that is, "like a thief in the night" (v. 2). On the other hand, the members of the church will be prepared for this event.

let us keep awake and be sober: The day of the Lord will not overtake Christians as some unexpected and disastrous event. Their "awakeness" and "sobriety" (self-control) is a function of their moral choices and Paul is encouraging that here. They can anticipate that coming day with confidence since they are not living in darkness. Paul's imperative: "let us not sleep".

breastplate of faith and love,... helmet the hope of salvation.: Paul tells this church that the fundamental Christian virtues of faith, love, and hope become the defensive armor that will insure that the Christians are prepared for the "day of the Lord," whenever it comes. They already possess these.

Resources used or adapted for this outline: Green, G. L. (2002). *The letters to the Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/definitions-and-observations-concerning-the-second-coming-of-christ>. John Piper (@JohnPiper). Giventa, B. R. (1998). *First and Second Thessalonians*. John Knox Press, Louisville, KY.